

BUILD SKILLS

The Seafarer • The Wanderer • The Wife's Lament

LITERARY ANALYSIS

A lyric poem expresses the thoughts and feelings of a single speaker. **Anglo-Saxon lyrics** were composed so they could easily be memorized and recited again. They have these elements:

- Lines with regular rhythms, usually four strong beats
- **Caesuras**, which are rhythmic breaks in the middle of lines where the reciter could pause for breath
- **Kennings**, which are two-word poetic renamings of people, places, and things, such as the kenning *whales' home* for the sea
- **Assonance**, which is the repetition of vowel sounds in unrhymed, stressed syllables (for example, "batter these ramparts")
- **Alliteration**, which is the repetition of initial consonant sounds in accented syllables (for example, "smashing surf")

Notice how these elements add a unique flavor to Anglo-Saxon lyrics.

READING STRATEGY

Knowing about the period in which a work was written will help you understand it better. Apply historical background information as you read the poems in this grouping. Use a diagram like the one below for "The Wanderer."

